

# THE BUTTERFLY PROJECT OVERVIEW

It began with a vision. On April 21, 2006, Tennessee Governor Phil Bredesen and Shelby County Mayor A C Wharton co-sponsored the Infant Mortality Summit in Memphis. Over 250 community leaders and activists came together to discuss the scope of the problem of infant mortality in Memphis and Shelby County. Out of that summit, The Butterfly Project was born. We chose a butterfly because of its illustrative life cycle:



the caterpillar representing a healthy woman



the cocoon representing a healthy pregnancy



the butterfly representing a healthy baby.



*The primary goal of the Butterfly Project is to increase positive birth outcomes.*

For more information about The Butterfly Project, visit [www.shelbycountyttn.gov](http://www.shelbycountyttn.gov)

*The Butterfly Project partners are:*

Shelby County Mayor A C Wharton

Tennessee Governor Phil Bredesen

Shelby County Government's  
Office on Infant Mortality

Shelby County Government's Division  
of Community Services

The Memphis and Shelby County  
Health Department

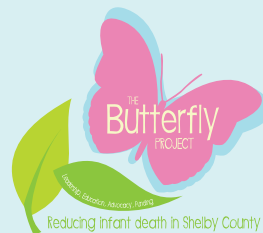
The State Department of Health

The Governor's Office of Children's  
Care Coordination

The Urban Child Institute

The March of Dimes

The Health Loop



The Butterfly Project  
(901) 526-1822, ext. 248

[Antionette.Holman@shelbycountyttn.gov](mailto:Antionette.Holman@shelbycountyttn.gov)



STRESSING THE  
IMPORTANCE OF  
WOMEN'S HEALTH  
DURING CHILD  
BEARING AGE

IN RECENT YEARS, MEMPHIS HAS GARNERED WIDESPREAD ATTENTION FOR HAVING ONE OF THE HIGHEST INFANT MORTALITY RATES IN THE COUNTRY. IN PARTICULAR, THE MEMPHIS AND SHELBY COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT REPORTS THE DEATH OF AFRICAN AMERICAN BABIES AS NEARLY THREE TIMES THAT OF WHITE BABIES.

- 11.5 of every 1,000 babies born alive dies before his or her first birthday.
- 15.5 of every 1,000 babies born alive to African American mothers dies before his or her first birthday.

*Tennessee Department of Health, 2005*

#### **In the United States**

- A health baby born costs approximately \$1,100.
- A baby born at 32-34 weeks costs approximately \$19,000.
- A baby born at 25 weeks costs approximately \$202,000.

*Center for Disease Control*

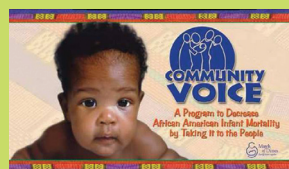


#### **THE METAMORPHOSIS**

The Butterfly Project is aimed at drastically reducing the infant mortality rate in Memphis and Shelby County and is comprised of two primary programs, Community Voice and Centering Pregnancy.

The leaders of the Butterfly Project are utilizing these programs to educate the community on the importance of reducing infant mortality and how it affects Memphis and Shelby County. In addition, The Butterfly Project is the primary advocate for additional programs and funding.

#### **COMMUNITY VOICE**



The Community Voice program originated in 2000 in Lynchburg, Virginia, and was adopted by Memphis and Shelby County in May 2007.

This consumer education program is a partnership between state government, Shelby County government and March of Dimes, and stresses the importance of women's health during child bearing age. It aims to raise awareness and encourage community action concerning preconception care, premature birth, preterm labor and infant safety.

Community Voice recognizes the valuable assets of churches, community centers, schools, business, civil and social organizations. Everyone can be a community voice by sharing the message.

#### **CENTERING PREGNANCY**

Centering Pregnancy is an innovative health care initiative that integrates three major components of prenatal care – health assessment, education and support – into a unified program with a group setting.

Eight to twelve women with similar gestational ages meet together for ten sessions throughout pregnancy and early postpartum where they learn self-care skills, participate in a facilitated discussion and develop a support network with other group members. Standard physical health assessment is completed by the practitioner within the group space.

